

THE GULL

Golden Gate Audubon Society Berkeley, California Volume 74 Number 8 September 1992

75th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Featured Speakers

PETER BERLE and PAUL EHRLICH

Our 75th anniversary celebration is set for Sunday, Oct. 4, 1992 at Ft. Mason, in San Francisco. Come and meet our special guest National Audubon Society President **Peter Berle**, and hear our keynote speaker, the renowned scientist, National Audubon Board member and author of *Population Bomb* and *Birder's Handbook*, **Paul Ehrlich**. Professor Ehrlich's latest book, *Birds in Jeopardy*, will be available for purchase, signed by the author. Festivities will begin at 6:30 p.m. in Conference Room A-1 on the first floor of Building A at Ft. Mason, near the Marina in San Francisco.

(continued on page 136)

FIRST FALL MEETING

MANU—THE WILDEST PLACE?

John Dillon will take us to Manu, Peru in our "opening season premier" **Thursday, Sept. 10**. The program will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda in Berkeley.

Manu National Park in southeastern Peru is the largest, least disturbed rainforest swath on earth. Tucked up against the face of the Andes, and protected from exploration by cataracts downriver, Manu has so far remained largely undisturbed and unseen. Manu is the size of Massachusetts, yet has fewer than 1000 inhabitants, many of whom actively reject outside contact in their effort to protect their traditional life-styles without agriculture or metal.

Ranging from 13,000 foot high Andean grasslands to lowland rainforest 12,000 feet below, Manu may

(continued on page 126)

EARTH SHARE OF CALIFORNIA

Golden Gate Audubon Society participates in Earth Share of California (formerly called the Environmental Federation), that raises money through employee giving campaigns in workplaces throughout the state. You can help. If you ask to have this choice in your employee giving campaign, it could translate into strong financial support for us.

This is all you have to do: Call Earth Share staff member Nancy Snow (415-882-9330) or John Boesel (510-527-9392) or reach them through their toll-free



number (1-800-368-1819) and say you are interested. You may already have Earth Share as a choice at your workplace—John or Nancy can tell you if this is the case.

Last year, employees in California demonstrated their concern with a significant rule of measurement—their pocketbooks. Employees throughout the state contributed an unprecedented \$1.4 million during the 1991–92 workplace giving campaigns, an increase of 50% over the year preceding. With your help the growth can continue. **Give Earth Share a call!**

FIRST FALL MEETING—MANU

(continued)

be the most biologically diverse place on earth. Its still abundant jaguars, giant river otters, thirteen species of monkeys and renowned clay-eating macaws have attracted research scientists and wildlife film makers for the past fifteen years. The recent PBS series *Millenium* began in Manu. Inevitably, Manu's isolation is being breached. The pressing question is whether this incredible wilderness can be protected and preserved. A limited number of ecotourists are being invited to Manu as a way of generating revenue for preservation. However, last year, with Peru in political chaos, only 80 people worldwide visited this immense park.

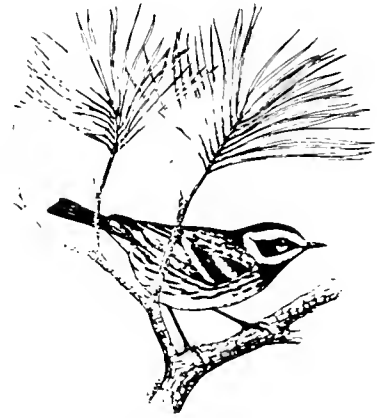
Radical new ideas are being considered, including selling macaws!

John Dillon, curator of the Randall Museum, visited Manu last year, and will discuss the natural and cultural richness of Manu and the strategies being explored to save it.

—JOELLE BUFFA

LETTER WRITING

The latest issue of *Audubon Activist* included a piece on what to do if you get a response from a legislator or a corporation when you have expressed your concern in a letter. Write back! And if it is positive, thank your correspondent; if negative, state your position again, and do it firmly. Don't be put off by technical language or public relations fluff. Restate what you have to say, and remind the legislator or the corporation that you care and you are paying attention. And you vote!



Send address changes to office promptly; Post office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$30 per year (individual); \$38 (family); includes *AUDUBON Magazine* and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$10 per year; single issues \$1. High school and college student membership \$18 per year. Senior citizen individual \$21, senior citizen family \$23. Associate Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 15, 1917,
and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

The *Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month, and July 15th for September issue.

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FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR

Saturday, September 5—Coastal San Francisco. Meet at 8 a.m. at the parking lot between South and Middle Lakes (Chain of Lakes) near the 41st Ave. and Lincoln Way entrance to Golden Gate Park. We will bird in the park, Lake Merced, and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in search of warblers, flycatchers, and vagrants. Bring your lunch and be prepared for cold weather near the coast. Leader: Dan Murphy (415) 564-0074 (✓)

Wednesday, September 9—Mini-trip to Alameda south shore and surrounding areas. Meet at 9 a.m. in Alameda at Broadway and Shoreline Dr. We will be looking for shorebirds and waterfowl. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301, and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

Sunday, September 13—San Mateo Coast. Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot (on the ocean side) at the junction of Hwy. 1 and Pescadero Rd. We will bird at Pescadero in the morning and at Año Nuevo in the afternoon. We will look for migrants and shorebirds in the mudflats, plus Pectoral and Baird's Sandpipers and tattlers and knots. We may also see Marbled Murrelets at Año Nuevo. Bring lunch and a light jacket. Leader: Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983. (✓)

Sunday, September 20—Pt. Reyes National Seashore. Meet at Inverness Park at the Knave of Hearts Bakery on Sir Francis Drake Blvd. at 8 a.m. We will concentrate on shorebird identification at Abbott's Lagoon and Limantour Estero. Bring a scope if you have one, lunch and liquids, and comfortable walking shoes. Heavy rain cancels. (If in doubt, call.) Leader: Lina Jane Priaire (510) 549-3187. (✓)

Sunday, Sept. 27—GGAS Monterey Bay pelagic trip. See *The GULL* for July/August for details or call 510-843-2222.

Sunday, September 27—Point Diablo, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Marin Co. Meet at 10 a.m. at the top of Hill 129, where we will watch for migrating hawks and land-birds until 2 p.m.

From San Francisco drive north across the Golden Gate Bridge and take Alexander Ave. exit. Turn left as if returning to San Francisco, drive under the freeway and bear to the right. Go up to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area; continue (past the intersection with a road coming up from Rodeo Valley) to the large tunnels on the right. Drive to the top of the hill, park and walk up the trail to the left of the second tunnel. We will bird from the observation point at the north end of the hilltop. Bring lunch and liquids. Sunscreen, a hat, and a wind-breaker may be advisable. Co-leaders: Carter Faust (415) 453-2899, and Herb Brandt (415) 239-2711. (✓)

Sunday, October 4—Presidio. Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot next to the Golden Gate Army Reserve Center off Lincoln Blvd. (the Baker Beach stop for MUNI bus #29). Take 25th Ave. north to Lincoln Blvd., turn right, enter the Presidio, and continue to the first intersection. Turn right on the dirt road, which leads to the Army Res. Ctr. (a two-story red brick building).

Our morning walk will take place along Lobos Creek, the last free flowing stream in the city and county of San Francisco. In addition to birding in this riparian habitat, emphasis will be placed on geology, history, and culture of the area. (With the conversion of the Presidio to a unit of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Lobos

Creek, and its role in the park is currently a focus of public hearing.) The walk will continue to Mountain Lake and return to the Baker Beach area by noon. Lunch is optional. Leader: Eve Iversen: (510) 232-2817.

Saturday, October 10—Beginners' trip to Coyote Hills Regional Park. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Visitors' Center. From East Bay take I-880 south to Rt. 84/Dumbarton Bridge exit. Go west and take Ardenwood/Newark Blvd. exit. Continue on Ardenwood Blvd. three quarters of a mile to Commerce Dr. and follow signs to Coyote Hills. From San Francisco take Hwy. 101 south beyond Redwood City, cross the Dumbarton Bridge and exit on Paseo Padre Pkwy.; go north one mile to Patterson Ranch Rd. and follow signs to Coyote Hills. Bring lunch, liquids, and binoculars and field guides if you have them. This is a unique park with fresh water habitat. Leader: Gene Hull (510) 525-6893. \$ (✓)

Wednesday, October 14—Mini-trip to East Bay shoreline. Meet at 9:15 a.m. From Hwy. 80 in Emeryville, take Powell St. exit and go west. Meet at the north end of the parking lot by the Holiday Inn. We will be looking for shorebirds of the area. Lunch optional. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301, and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

Trips marked with \$ go to parks and other sites that require an entrance fee.

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (✓). See below.

Problems: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call Russ Wilson, Field Trips Committee Chmn. (510) 524-2399.

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

JUNE/JULY OBSERVATIONS

We're at that funny time of year again when there's a last gasp of northern migrants and a tantalizing breeze of southern migrants and the local songfest has quieted down. To further muddy the metaphor... on the ocean of the bird year it's dead flat calm. Well, maybe there's a bit of ground-swell.

In early June northwest winds brought one of the best migrant warbler seasons in recent memory to a screeching halt, but the consequent marine upwellings gave rise to cautious optimism that the seabird breeding season will not be a complete and total disaster. On SE Farallon, Pigeon Guillemots and Cassin's Auklets finally laid eggs in the early to mid-part of the month—the latest initiation date for the auklets in 22 years of observation. In early June, nesting Common Murres were about one third of normal numbers (PP).

In the meantime, on the mainland a couple of interesting sightings cropped up. In Pacifica, an adult Red-throated Loon was spotted with a chick on June 13th (PJ); shortly after that the adult disappeared and the chick was found dead. Nonetheless, this would constitute the first Red-throated Loon breeding record for California. And on June 9th, three breeding-plumaged Horned Grebes were at Bridgeport Reservoir in Mono County (RS). At least one was still present on the 13th (AD). No attempt was made to find evidence of nesting, but their presence was particularly unusual since they are coastal rather than inland migrants and are rarely found in the interior in the spring.

In contrast to the *El Nino* pessimism from SE Farallon, pelagic trips on Monterey Bay in late May reported

good numbers of birds—continued upwelling meant there was plenty of food available inside the bay. Sightings included twenty to twenty-five Black, seventy-five Ashy, two Fork-tailed and up to three Leach's Storm-Petrels; one Flesh-footed and one hundred fifty Pink-footed Shearwaters; forty Black-footed Albatross; one hundred Sabine's Gulls; four Xantus' Murrelets; one South Polar Skua; and eight Arctic Terns. On the 30th, there was krill with feeding Humpback Whales (DLSh). Late June and early July brought a South Polar Skua, twelve Xantus' and four Craveri's Murrelets to Monterey Bay (LCo); ten Sabine's Gulls, ten Arctic Terns (JM), a Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel and an unprecedentedly early Short-tailed Shearwater (DGY) to the waters off SE Farallon; and one Ashy and three Black Storm-Petrels to on-shore watchers at Pigeon Point (MFe, RN, PhR fide RSTh). But in spite of the justified gloom and doom about the warm waters off-shore, there were a couple of wonderful back-slappers that can be chalked up to this same warm water: the immature female **Brown Booby** remained on SE Farallon thru July 12 (DGY); a white-phase **Red-footed Booby** was at Capitola on June 8th (SG); and a **Masked Booby** put in sporadic appearances at the Salinas River mouth on June 18th, 20th and 22nd (DR, JM), causing much hair-pulling and gnashing of teeth among observers who arrived on the 19th, 21st and 23rd, although a very late and relatively unusual Semipalmated Sandpiper on the 23rd helped alleviate some of the anguish (RJR). In addition, a pair of Least Terns was observed there on the 21st (CLu). Researchers studying Snowy Plovers nesting along the Monterey coast have found that if nests are surrounded with fencing, predation

is reduced and hatching success doubles (PRBO). Nests and eggs are not always easy to distinguish, however, and one fenced nest turned out to possibly belong to the above-mentioned pair of Least Terns who promptly abandoned it, a story both of hope and frustration. Locally, Least Terns are known to nest only at the Alameda Naval Air Station, at Pittsburg, and, sometimes, at the Oakland Airport. No one likes to see a nest, particularly that of an endangered species, abandoned, but news that Least Terns may have attempted to nest in a new location must be greeted with great joy.

An adult Little Blue Heron was found in the heronry at the Alviso Unit of the SF Bay NWR from June 5th thru 12th (MiF, SGI). In the South Bay, a banded, formerly captive Sacred Ibis continues to be reported as a Wood Stork. A Swainson's Hawk, flying and calling over Mt. Davidson in SF on July 12th, was misplaced (DGY). Franklin's Gulls were sighted at Crowley Lake on May 30 (PJM) and Alviso on July 1st to 4th (SBT, AME). Black Terns were reported from inside the Bay as well as from the Salinas River, Lake Almanor, Bridgeport Reservoir and Crowley Lake (LJP, RJR, AD, JRo, PJM). On Sunday, June 7, a pair of **Black Skimmers** caused a stir at Alameda South Shore as they flew a bit and rested a lot (LJP, LLu, AD, JM, ES). They were around the following day and then gone. Another individual was seen at Hayward Shoreline that same Sunday (RJR). Up to four Marbled Murrelets have been seen off of Chimney Rock (LLu), an odd location since their known nest sites are well to the north and south of Point Reyes and the birds aren't expected along this section of the coast until later in the season.

A White-winged Dove was at Point

Reyes on June 26 (BiL, MLR, DDeS); the following day a Long-eared Owl circled the Lighthouse a couple of times before heading out toward Bodega Bay (LLu, AD, KH). Outer Point Reyes also boasted Eastern Kingbird and Red-eyed Vireo on the 1st of June (RS, KH); Veery on the 4th (SNGH, DWm); Lesser Nighthawk (MLa) and Red-eyed Vireo (JM) on June 6th; Least Flycatcher on the 7th (MB); and Willow Flycatcher and Gray Catbird on the 25th (RS). Eastern Kingbirds were also reported from SE Farallon and San Francisco (PP, DSg, LD). A **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**, always a crowd-pleaser, was first reported from Olema on June 28th and stayed around for the net two days (PSny, SJoh, RS, LLu). A **Wood Thrush** near Mono Lake was on private land and inaccessible, but it's song could be heard from perfectly public listening spots (fide ES). Gray Catbirds, hardly regulars in California, were seen in Merced (AD) and Alpine (LyC) Counties. SE Farallon had four Red-eyed Vireos from June 1 to 6 (PP).

There's an impressive warbler list again this month. And it's interesting to note that although NW winds could be expected to have a far greater impact on birds landing on the Farallones than on the mainland, a surprising number of these observations are June 7 or earlier, before the NW winds kicked up. Weather isn't all, but it's a lot.

WARBLERS

Tennessee Warbler

1,3	6/3,6	Point Reyes	JM,SBT,JD
1,1	6/6, 9-12	San Mateo Coast	BS fide RSTh
1	6/9	San Mateo Coast	BS fide RSTh
1	7/6	Palomarin	KH

Northern Parula

15 total	5/31-6/29	Point Reyes	mob
2	6/1-2	SE Farallon	PP
1	6/1	Berkeley	EMacL
1,1	6/4,19	Bolinas	RMS,JCS
1	6/7	Tilden Park	ES
1	6/7	Mt. San Bruno	JMcC
1	6/7	Bodega Bay	DN

1,1	6/10,23	Monterey County	fide RC, fide LLu
3 total	6/13-27	San Francisco	DS, LD
1	6/13	Mono Lake	RJR
1	6/22	Mendocino Co.	FrT
1	6/28	Los Gatos	SBT

Chestnut-sided Warbler

3 total	5/31-6/12	Point Reyes	mob
1	6/2	SE Farallon	PP

Magnolia Warbler

3 total	6/3-24	Point Reyes	JM,JCS,RS
1	6/6	SE Farallon	PP

Yellow-rumped Warbler

1	6/3	Point Reyes	JM, MLR
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Black-throated Green Warbler

1	6/6	Point Reyes	DLEd
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Blackburnian Warbler

1	6/2	Point Reyes	TE
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Yellow-throated Warbler

1,1	6/2,2-3	Point Reyes	mob
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Prairie Warbler

1	6/23	Humboldt Co.	JCS
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Bay-breasted Warbler

1	6/16-23	Humboldt Co.	JCS
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Blackpoll Warbler

1	6/6	Point Reyes	JCS
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Black-and-white Warbler

4 total	6/1-27	Point Reyes	RS,KH, SBT,JM
1	6/5	Stinson Beach	SNGH, KH
1	6/7	Gualala	BDP
1	6/20	Pacific Grove	DSg
1	7/3	San Francisco	DSg

American Redstart

18 total	6/1-6	Point Reyes	mob
7 total	6/1-21	SE Farallon	PP
1	6/1-2	Bodega Bay	DN
1,1	6,6-7,27	Bolinas	CAX,KH
1	6/16	Pacific Grove	BWy
1	6/20-21	San Francisco	GDeg, DSg
1	6/23	Humboldt Co.	JCS

Worm-eating Warbler

1,1	6/1,24	Point Reyes	RS,KH,FGB, SGI
1,1	6/4,17-18	San Francisco	ASH
1	6/6-7	SE Farallon	PP
1	6/17	Coyote Creek	SBT,MDa

Ovenbird

1	6/5	San Francisco	ASH
1,1	6/6,7	Point Reyes	SBT, MHom
6 total	6/1-15	SE Farallon	PP
1	6/19	Palomarin	fide KH

Kentucky Warbler

1	5/24-6/27	Tahoe Donner	mob
2 total	6/1-7	SE Farallon	PP
1	6/14-21	Pacific Grove	RC,BWy,DSg

Hooded Warbler

1	6/1-9	Tilden Park	mob
4 total	6/2-22	Monterey Co.	mob
1	6/5-22	Stinson Beach	KH

1	6/13-7/12	San Francisco	mob
1	6/30	Mountain View	StL
1	7/1-2	Wildcat Canyon	RW,JM
1	7/1	Mt. San Bruno	ASH

Canada Warbler

1	6/3	Bolinas Lagoon	RS,KH
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Yellow-Breasted Chat

2-3	4/24-6/26	Bethel Island	SGI
2 total	5/17-6/7	Bodega Bay	DN

There was a **Scarlet Tanager** at Point Reyes on the 18th of June (fide JCS); Summer Tanagers at Bolinas Lagoon (RS, KH) and SE Farallon; and a red tanager, possibly Hepatic, possibly Summer, in San Francisco on the 16th (GiT). Lots of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (twenty-one) were around, including a male that nested and produced young with a female Black-headed Grosbeak in Tilden Park (mob). Twelve Indigo Buntings were reported.

A singing Clay-colored Sparrow in Brisbane on June 6 (ASH); Bobolinks at Bodega and SE Farallon on June 1 (CD, PP); Great-tailed Grackle at Mono Lake on June 14, only the 2nd Mono record ever (AD, CLu, LLu); and Baltimore Oriole at a Hummingbird feeder in Sunnyvale (KW) round out the month. Time to start the shorebird watch... fall is upon us.

OBSERVERS

Chuck Alexander, Stephen F. Bailey, Bruce Barrett, Florence G. Bennett, Mathias Bergstrom, Mary Brezner, Michael Bumgartner, Mark Butler, Chris Carpenter, Rita Carratello, Luke Cole, John Comstock, Lyann Comrack, J. Scott Cox, Maryann Danielson, Jim Danzenbaker, Gary Deghi, Clare Demartini, Dave DeSante, Ann Dewart, Lily Douglas, Todd Easterla, Leo Edson, David L. Edwards, Alan M. Eisner, Mike Feighner, Mark Fenner, Steve Glover, Sarah Griffin, Keith Hansen, Elina Holst, Mark Homrighausen, Alan S. Hopkins, Steven N. G. Howell, Joan M. Humphrey, Sue Johnson, Paul Jones, J. Kemper, Michael Larkin, Bill Lenarz, Cindy Lieurance, Leslie Lieurance, Steven Long, John McCormick, Peter J. Metropulos, Joe

Morlan, Martin Myers, Dan Nelson, Rod Norden, Benjamin D. Parmeter, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Lina Jane Prairie, Peter Pyle, Robert J. Richmond, Don Roberson, Mary Louise Rosegay, Phil Rostron, Jim Roweth, Barry Sauppe, Debra Love Shearwater, Dan Singer, Paul Snyder, Rich Stallcup, John C. Sterling, Robert M. Stewart, Emilie Strauss, Scott B. Terrill, Gil Thompson, Ron S. Thorn, R. F. Tintle, Francis Toldi, Kathy Webb, Russ Wilson, David Wimpfheimer, Betty Wyatt, David G. Yee

—ANN DEWART

UPCOMING GGAS PROGRAMS

OCTOBER 8

BIRDS OF THE
URBAN CORRIDOR

San Francisco Kathryn Rambo

NOVEMBER 13

AN EVENING WITH BATS

Berkeley Patricia Winters

Berkeley programs are at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda. San Francisco programs are at the Josephine Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way. All programs begin at 7:30 p.m.



CONSERVATION NOTES

DRAMATIC WIN IN FEDERAL COURT

On Wednesday, June 24, 1992, Judge Thelton Henderson found in favor of the Golden Gate Audubon Society in our fight to preserve the Distribution Center site wetlands, directly adjacent to Arrowhead Marsh.

Arrowhead Marsh's 46 acres of wetlands are all that are left of over 2000 acres of pristine tidal marsh that once constituted San Leandro Bay. While tragically decimated by filling, Arrowhead Marsh still hosts large numbers of waterfowl, shorebirds and many other species, including the endangered California Clapper Rail. It was once an area so rich in wildlife that in the 1930's it was designated a State Wildlife Refuge. Despite that designation, San Leandro Bay's wetlands were filled to create the Oakland Airport, Bay Farm Island and, as late as 1972, the Distribution Center.

Though the Distribution Center's 90 acres were partially filled during this time period, much of the site remained wet and it continued to provide habitat for migratory waterfowl and shorebirds.

When in the late 1980's the Port of Oakland decided to build on the Distribution Center, the Army Corps of Engineers conveniently decided that there were no wetlands on the site. GGAS knew otherwise and took the Corps to court. We won our first lawsuit and Judge Thelton Henderson told the Corps to redo their analysis and come up with some wetlands or explain to him why there are none.

Three years later the Corps produced their new "jurisdictional determination" and out of 90 acres on the site they found only fifteen acres of wetlands.

Greatly disappointed, GGAS again took the Corps to court.

And again we were successful. In his latest decision, Judge Henderson used forceful language to tell the Corps that they were again in error, calling the basis for their determination "nonsensical."

Disappointingly, the Judge felt that the law forbade determining the actual wetland acreage himself. We can hope, however, that his strong representations to the Corps will result in their finally reaching an accurate determination of the amount of wetlands on the site.

We believe that a determination should show essentially all of the site as wetlands.

Finally, the judge made it very clear to them (wonderfully strong language) that their determination should not take another three years, and gave them 180 days to reach a decision or face his displeasure.

Whatever the outcome, the story will not be over. Even if we are totally victorious and the Corp determines the whole site to be wetlands, the Port can then apply for a permit to fill the wetlands (which is what it should have done in the first place) and then we'll be in a regulatory fight.

For now we can savor our victory. Wetlands have been preserved again. Waterfowl and shorebirds will yet have a haven during the fall migration and a home over the winter.

Our victory was possible only thanks to your support. Many members have provided factual information on bird usage of the site which was used in court. Many of you sent generous donations to take this case to court and to persevere through a second trial (each costing at least \$20,000). We count on your continued generous support.

This victory is not final in this ongoing story.

I-80 AND THE CRESCENT

The Board of GGAS voted to express particular thanks to you, our members, for your wonderful response to an emergency appeal for letters.

An Action Alert mailed to a select list of activist members resulted in an outpouring of letters. Over one hundred letters were delivered to the S.F. Bay Conservation and Development Commission opposing the widening of Hwy. I-80 next to the Emeryville Crescent.

That issue was the loss of upland habitat adjacent to the marsh and the filling of the Bay between the Ashby Split and Emeryville.

As a direct result of your letters the Commission ordered CALTRANS to: 1) put no fill in the Bay between Ashby Split and Emeryville, 2) reduce the proposed shoulder width next to the crescent so as to preserve as much upland habitat as possible (and to remove all iceplants and replace it with native vegetation), 3) create 4500 square feet of new adjacent upland habitat and 4) use sound water quality measures in order to reduce the amount of polluted runoff entering the marsh from I-80.

The upland habitat issue is particularly critical because it is this habitat that shorebirds, small wetland related mammals and endangered species such as the salt marsh harvest mouse and the clapper rail retreat to during high tides and storms.

The upland vegetation also provides cover for these critters so that they can avoid predators.

A Board member and experienced birder says that the Crescent is the only place where she has seen shorebirds almost standing on top of one another because the upland habitat is so reduced during high tides. Your letters have

not only saved this habitat but the action will lead to an increase.

Your letters have averted another threat to the Crescent. Thanks!

If you are not on our Action Alert list but want to be, please write or call the Office (510-843-2222). Help protect our Bay and its wildlife resources. Your letters will have an effect. Please join us!

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT FOR QUALITY OF LIFE

A nationwide public information campaign for the proposed new Quality of Life Amendment to the United States Constitution was announced in July as America looked toward its 211th year.

The amendment would require conservation and responsible use of the nation's natural resources.

"It's appropriate that we should begin our nationwide effort on the Fourth of July. We hope the amendment will mark the beginning of a new era of concern for our natural resources," said William Penn Mott, Jr., former director of the National Park Service, "It acknowledges in the strongest legal terms that our citizens' health and welfare ultimately depends on the health and welfare of the environment in which we live."

The new amendment is subtitled, "sustaining quality of life through responsible use of resources." Here is the text: *The natural resources of the United States, including air, water, land, plants and animals, shall be protected, conserved and used responsibly for the benefit of the people in order to preserve biodiversity, protect the health and safety of the people, and sustain the*

quality of life for present and future generations. The Congress and the several States shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Other supporters of the Quality of Life Amendment besides Mott include former California congressman Paul N. (Pete) McCloskey; former New York congresswoman Bella Abzug; Luna Leopold, professor emeritus at the University of California; actor Ed Begley, Jr.; Charles Warren, executive officer of the California State Lands Commission; and Sylvia McLaughlin, chair of Save San Francisco Bay, among many others.

Organizations supporting the amendment include the California Oak Foundation, Open Space America, and the East Bay Regional Park District Board of Directors.

"It's absolutely appropriate when world leaders gathered in Rio de Janeiro to begin work on saving the planet, for the United States to recognize in the most forthright way that we have a sacred trust to preserve, protect and restore our life support system—the earth that sustains us all," said Ted Radke of the East Bay Regional Park District Board of Directors. Radke was a leader in the first Earth Day celebration in 1970.

"Passage of the Quality of Life Amendment will have a positive impact on the economy, and it will jump-start the job market," said Janet Cobb, chair of First Friends of the Amendment.

"This is the perfect place for the peace dividend," she suggested. "Just give us the allocation that would have gone to one—well, maybe two—B-1 bombers, and you'll see how many alternative transit corridors (trails) our young people can build, you'll see rivers and creeks restored so that they support

life again, you'll see reforestation, and you'll see happy, productive people earning a decent living preserving the American dream."

There have been 27 amendments approved since the original Constitution was adopted in 1787. The most recent amendment, approved in May, related to congressional salaries and had been pending for more than 200 years. In order for a constitutional amendment to become law, it must be approved by a two-thirds vote of each house of Congress, and then ratified by three-fourths of the states.

The new amendment is a project of the Tides Foundation. For more information, call Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America, 116 New Montgomery St., Suite 220, San Francisco, CA 94105 or telephone (415) 543-2022.

MONO LAKE

In a classic case of inflexibility and insensitivity by a government bureaucracy, the LA Dept. of Water and Power (DWP) has publicly admitted it has spent **more than \$12 million in ratepayer money** in fighting the Mono Lake Committee in court! And while DWP bureaucrats have been fighting every reasonable attempt at compromise, the precarious balance that nature has created at Mono Lake is suffering.

Recently the Mono Lake Committee has achieved some progress in dealing with the Dept. of Water and Power. This comes from negotiations with the political leadership at DWP and the City of Los Angeles. On the other hand DWP's bureaucrats continue to make a mockery of the court victories.

The committee helped draft and pass landmark legislation to provide LA with

(continued on page 142)

DO WE HAVE A
JOB FOR YOU?

Looking for a meaningful volunteer activity? Do you want to do something for the Audubon cause? Do you have some hours you can give? Perhaps we have something that will interest you.

Over the years, GGAS has greatly expanded its scope of activities. We've brought Audubon Adventures into more and more classrooms. We've begun ambitious bird census programs that will help define the state of our environment; these include a year long bird census at the Presidio and a Burrowing Owl census. We are planning an Alameda Co. breeding bird atlas.

Environmental protection activities have increased: testimony at public hearings, monitoring local agency actions, observing public meetings and hearings, organizing chapter response through action alerts by mail and phone. Our litigation efforts have saved Oakland Airport wetlands, protected wetlands at the Distribution Center Site, and helped to bring more fresh water into the Bay from the Delta.

There is a cycle of fascinating monthly programs, more than 80 field trips a year, and three seed sales, a Bird-a-thon, and the Christmas Counts. All these require hands, time, talent and effort. It is worth doing, and there is enjoyment and reward for the volunteer. One part-time staff person is not enough for all that needs attention.

In the next column you will find a volunteer response form. Please see what you might do to join in our efforts. You will be very welcome.

THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY offers many opportunities to meet fellow members and supporters and to advance the Audubon Cause. Make time to take part in the affairs of your society. Here are a few examples for which you might volunteer:

- () Birdseed Sales
- () Weekend Greeter at Audubon Canyon Ranch
- () Help in the office: 3 hours per week or so
- () Monthly meeting greeter
 - () SF () Berkeley
- () Christmas Count
- () April Birdathon
- () Letter writing
- () Helping at GGAS booth at special events
- () Help in a pinch: volunteer pool
- () Data entry in office computer
- () Help with food for special events
- () Fundraising
- () Illustrations for *The GULL*
- () Articles for *The GULL*

If you could help, please check items of interest and return this form to GGAS. We will use this information only to follow up on your offer of help.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: () _____

Comments are invited, please use a separate sheet of paper. If you have questions call the office, 510-843-2222.

OCTOBER CELEBRATION

(continued from page 1)

GGAS was born on Jan. 15, 1917, as The Audubon Association of the Pacific and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. We have 75 years of conservation, birding and public education achievements of which to be proud and 75 years of volunteer efforts to recognize. The GGAS officers and directors invite you to join in an evening of celebration and catch-up with old GGAS friends. Beverages and substantial hors d'oeuvres will be provided. The fun band, I'll Be Right Home Honey, will entertain.

Admission is \$12 per person for members of GGAS, \$15 for non-members, and free to anyone who has been a GGAS member continuously since we joined National Audubon in 1948. Space is limited, so reserve your tickets now by completing the reservation form in the center of *The Gull* and returning it to the GGAS office with your check. For information please call the office. We would love to have you come and enjoy the celebration!

WE NEED YOUR REMINISCENCES

We would like to share your stories of the Golden Gate Audubon's past, as part of our 75th anniversary celebration on October 4. If you have a story of the early years of GGAS (or, even better, The Audubon Association of the Pacific), please call the office. We would like a chance to chat, even if you think you have nothing special to offer, so please call 510-843-2222.

FIRST FALL SEED SALE

Fall is here and for GGAS it means planning for a whopping Seed Sale. As feeders grow in popularity, many have

come to depend on us for the food. And—our sales fund a larger and larger portion of our conservation work.

We offer a variety of reasonably priced high quality seed mixtures which are well-suited to attract local bird populations. The feeders we feature are selected as the best quality for the price.

We have stocked an 8 oz. size window feeder (attached by suction cup), an easy to clean 12 oz. flat saucer design from Aspects, as well as the standard 16 oz. hanging bottle design from past sales. Included are instructions for formula and cleaning.

Suet (beef or mutton fat) is the tastiest, least expensive, and most readily available source of animal fats for birds. It is popular with nearly all birds in winter, especially when mixed with weeds and other tid-bits. Finding a local source for suet in our super-market world is not easy, so we will offer suet cakes, to be used in suet basket feeders. The cakes consist of beef suet, sunflower seeds, millet, and grain products.

To avoid disappointment we urge you to order and prepay to guarantee the type and quantity of seed you require. We will have some extra quantities available, but not in the 50-pound size.

ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS

Please order by Sept. 14, at the latest, making your check payable to GGAS. Confirmation will be sent a week prior to the sale. Send a self-addressed envelope, please.

Berkeley pick-up, Friday, Sept. 25 between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., and Saturday, Sept. 26 between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., at the GGAS office, 2530 San Pablo Ave., Suite G. Parking is on the north side of the building.

GGAS BIRD SEED AND FEEDER SALE

ORDER AND PREPAY BY SEPTEMBER 14
PICK UP ON FRIDAY, SEPT. 25, SATURDAY, SEPT. 26
PICK UP IN BERKELEY AT THE GGAS OFFICE.

SEED	QUANTITY	AMOUNT
GGAS' OWN PREMIUM MIX 20 lbs. \$10.00		
Contains only red and white millet and black oil sunflower seed. 50 lbs. \$19.00		
VOLKMAN WILD BIRD SEED 20 lbs. \$ 9.00		
Composed of only red and white millet—no sunflower seeds (no squirrels) 50 lbs. \$16.00		
BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEED 25 lbs. \$15.00		
50 lbs. \$25.00		
NIGER (THISTLE SEED) 5lbs. \$ 10.00		

FEEDERS

DROLL YANKEE 16"	\$28.00	
THISTLE FEEDER	\$10.00	
HUMMINGBIRD	\$10.00	
ZINGER (saucer style)	\$15.00	
HUMMINGBIRD (16 oz. bottle)	\$12.00	
SUET CAGE	\$ 5.50	
FEEDER POLE (sectional)	\$16.00	

Name _____	SUB-TOTAL	
Address _____	ADD TAX (0825%)	
_____	TOTAL	
Phone () _____	CONTRIBUTION TO GGAS	
	TOTAL	



75th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION TICKET ORDER

Enclosed is my check

Name _____	Please send me _____ tickets.
Address _____	_____ \$12.00 members
_____	_____ \$15.00 others
Phone () _____	_____ TOTAL

NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRDS IN DECLINE

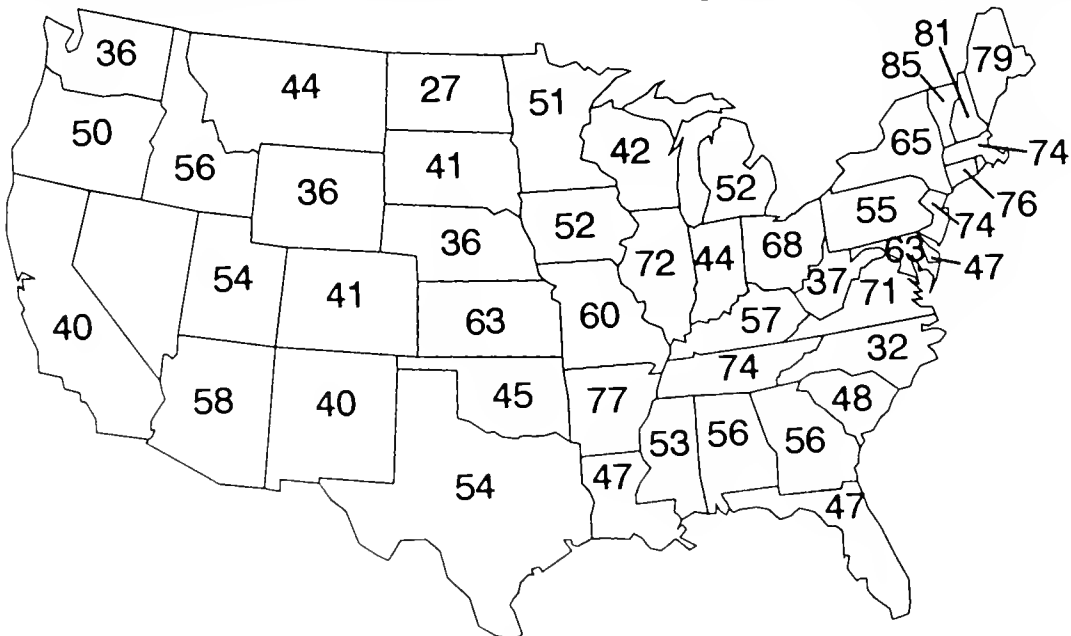
Long-term observations suggest that the populations of many species of birds that nest in north America and winter in Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America are declining. Recent declines followed a period of stability or in some cases increasing abundance. These conclusions are based on data collected from the Eastern Region of the North American Breeding Bird Survey, an annual survey of United States and Canadian birds. The results show striking differences in population trends for neotropical migratory birds between the two study periods of 1966–78 and 1978–87.

In eastern United States, where the best information is available, long-term surveys indicate that populations of 71% of the species classified as neotropical migratory birds declined between 1978 and 1987. Of the 44 species showing negative trends, 20 exhibited statistically significant declines. Declines for some species have been precipitous. For example, Bay-breasted and Tennessee Warblers decreased in

abundance an average of nearly 16% and 12% per year, respectively in the period. Both species had increased in abundance between 1966 and 1978. Populations of some species have decreased since 1966. Numbers of Cerulian Warblers, for example, declined an average of 2.5% per year since the study began in 1966. Meanwhile, populations of permanent-resident species and temperate-zone migrants were stable.

Numbers on the map below represent the percentages of neotropical migratory bird species with population declines in individual states between 1980 and 1989, based on data from the breeding bird survey as reported by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Biologists and resource managers agree that the factors responsible for recent declines in some neotropical migratory birds are highly complex. It is uncertain why population trends for some species reversed during the two study periods, and remained constant for other species. Two primary factors have been suggested to explain declines: fragmentation of breeding ground habitat in the US and Canada and loss of wintering habitat in Mexico, the



Caribbean, Central and South America.

In eastern North America, forest composition has changed since historical times. Large blocks of mature forest have been reduced to smaller patches or replaced with younger forests that differ vegetatively. Habitat fragmentation results in increased pressure from competition, predators and nest parasites like the Brown-headed Cowbird. There is some indication that forest dwelling species like the Wood Thrush and Scarlet Tanager may be hurt by forest fragmentation, but conflicting results exist. Changes in forest vegetation may also affect the habitat requirements of breeding birds.

In the western United States, many neotropical migrants like Lucy's Warbler and Black-chinned Hummingbird depend on deciduous forest in canyons and riparian areas. These habitats are under increasing pressure from development projects, livestock grazing and urban growth. Sparrows and other prairie species have also suffered habitat loss due to conversion of natural habitats into agricultural lands.

During annual migration, migrants often funnel through relatively small staging areas. These areas are important for feeding and resting. For example, Monomy Island, Massachusetts, Cape May Point, and the Delmarva Peninsula of Maryland and Virginia witness the passage of thousands of raptors and landbirds each autumn. Similarly, in spring, waves of neotropical migratory birds arrive on the shores of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama to feed after the long nonstop passage over the Gulf of Mexico. Though often small in extent, these staging areas are of vital importance during migration.

During the nonbreeding season in Latin America, the distributions of neotropical migrants are often compressed into geographic areas that are small relative to those used during the breeding season. For example, a majority of birds that breed in western North America overwinter in a relatively restricted area of western Mexico. Many species also have very localized distributions. For example the Kirtland's and Golden-cheeked Warbler winter in an area just a few hundred square kilometers. Because of their localized distribution, neotropical migrants are particularly vulnerable to habitat loss on the wintering grounds. This problem is acute in the Caribbean Basin, where vital island habitats are particularly threatened. Even on a local scale, destruction of forests could have dramatic effects on neotropical migrants throughout their ranges.

While all this is not news, there is something notable growing out of the increasing awareness of alarming losses. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and four federal agencies, Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management, are developing a coordinated attack to provide annual recommendations to Congress, to solicit funds to support research and management programs, to coordinate outreach to the academic and private conservation communities, and to develop state and other public and private partnerships. A coordinated program of monitoring, research, management and education is needed. You will be hearing more about this.



HIDING BEHIND THE GREEN MASK

With all the excellent environmental organizations desperate for money, it is inexcusable to fund despoilers who paint themselves green. A few basic precautions: Never give money or allegiance to a group you don't know a lot about. Ask for a copy of the annual report, a list of supporters, a written statement of mission and the percent of receipts spent on overhead. An outfit that doesn't promptly provide this information may have something to hide.

Make sure any group you get behind is addressing at least one of the real issues that threaten our planet: overpopulation, deforestation, global warming, ozone depletion, habitat destruction, air and water pollution, loss of biodiversity. Maybe the focus is small and local—wolf restoration in Yellowstone, for instance. That's fine; often you can get the best return backing a small genuinely grass-roots group rather than a national bureaucracy.

Here is a sampler of groups that should not be mistaken for environmental organizations:

Alliance for Environment and Resources, Sacramento, California. When we called this organization, we reached the offices of the California Forestry Association. Judging by the materials provided to us, the mission of the alliance is to persuade the public that environmentalists are crippling the efforts of the forest-products industry to take care of the public forests.

Desert Conservation Institute, Sacramento, California. Sponsor: the mining industry. Purpose: to defeat the California Desert Protection Act. This group maintains that "mining is a good neighbor to the desert and the environment."

Environmental Conservation Organization, Maywood, Illinois.

Claiming dozens of sponsors, including the Land Improvement Contractors of America, the American Farm Bureau Federation and a host of state Farm Bureaus, this group argues that federal regulators should get out of the way and "allow the creativity of free enterprise to protect true wetlands."

Information Council for the Environment, Grand Forks, North Dakota. We found this group headquartered at the Minnkota Power Cooperative. Funded by coal and utility companies, its mission is to persuade Congress and the public that global warming is a myth, so there's no need to curtail production of greenhouse gases. In fact, we were assured when we called, "We're living in a CO₂-starved environment right now."

National Endangered Species Act Reform Coalition, Washington, D.C. The Endangered Species Act is up for reauthorization by Congress this year, and this group wants to see it weakened because of its "increasingly adverse impacts on public projects, localities, industries and individuals." Sponsors include the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Water Resources Association and a number of western utility companies.

National Wetlands Coalition, Washington, D.C. This is the group behind current efforts to narrow the definition of wetlands protected by federal regulations. Its logo is a duck flying over cattails, but its mission is to open more wetlands to development. Sponsors: primarily land developers and oil and gas companies.

People for the West, Pueblo, Colorado. Created two years ago with the support of the Northwest Mining Association to block reform of the 1872 Mining Act, People for the West identifies its sponsors as "communities, natural resource and related industries, individuals and local governments

advocating support for continued management of public lands for multiple use," but its board of directors is dominated by mining interests.

Wilderness Impact Research Foundation, Elko, Nevada. Sponsors: Industry associations (the Rocky Mountain Oil and Gas Association, National Forest Products Association, National Cattleman's Association and Northwest Mining Association, to name a few) and other groups (United Four-Wheel Drive Association, Motorcycle Industry Council, International Snowmobile Council) opposed to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Mission: "Educating the public about the damage wilderness causes society, the economy and even wildlife."

Harrowsmith Country Life, May/June 1992

CONTRIBUTORS

Back Yard Birder Meg Pauletich's column will resume with *The GULL* for October.

Last month *The GULL* brought you a new voice, Geraldine Arko of El Cerrito, and a continuation is published in this issue. This month we introduce a retired *Examiner* reporter, Alan Cline, of Berkeley, who Elderhosteled to bird in Brazil.

Elsewhere in this issue we are asking for volunteers, and we repeat an invitation to those of you who have something to say, to send along your manuscripts. It is best if double-spaced, with a line length of 35 characters.

THE
MONTHLY



GULL
BULLETIN

VOLUME 6

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, AUGUST, 1924

NUMBER 8

CALIFORNIA GREAT BLUE HERON

Years ago this bird was confined to an area much more limited than of late, for it is fond of water and, with the advance of the irrigation ditches, it has followed these channels over our great valleys and up into the foothills of the Sierra, showing a goodly increase in numbers. In spite of their being among our most useful birds, there is no doubt that many are killed just to see how far a gun will carry.

As a gopher killer, the heron stands supreme. Waiting is his specialty and, as time is no object, he always gets the gopher. As these birds have spread about, they seem to have become tamer. Often I see them in the ditches within a few feet of inhabited houses, and the time may come when they will be to this country as the stork is to Europe.

I have heard a few criticisms of them. One turkey raiser complains of their killing young turkeys. A party at Crow's Landing says that they kill young ducks that persist in using the ditches for swimming pools. A rabbit fancier contends that young rabbits are considered a delicacy by these birds. But without questioning these reports, I cannot believe that this mild bird, which in my experience reserves his aggressiveness for fish, frogs and gophers, will ever become other than beneficial to man.

CARL R. SMITH.

MONO LAKE

(continued from page 134)

\$60 million in alternative water supplies to solve the Mono Lake controversy. It has worked with LA public officials to promote conservation and water reclamation in southern California. It has participated in Mayor Bradley's Blue Ribbon Committee to reform LA's water rate structure. And yet, DWP staff continue to erect roadblocks. They refuse to accept court decisions. In 1990 for instance, courts ordered DWP to restore Mono Lake's streams which DWP decimated for 50 years. DWP has fought the restoration every step of the way.

Since November DWP has forced the Mono Lake Committee back to court **four** separate times, arguing every aspect of stream recovery. **Four times they have lost.**

Would it not be a good time to start a letter barrage to Mayor Tom Bradley and the Los Angeles City Council? The address is:

CITY HALL
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

FALL BIRDING CLASSES IN SAN FRANCISCO

Evening birding classes taught by **Joe Morlan** will be starting Sept. 8, 9 and 10. All classes meet 7-9:30 p.m. in room 222, Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore at Bay St. Free parking is in the school lot off Bay St. on the east side of the building.

The instructor is co-author of *Birds of Northern California* and compiler of the recorded "Northern California Rare Bird Alert" sponsored by Golden Gate Audubon Society. Slides illustrate all classes and the text for all classes is

A Field Guide to Birds of North America by the National Geographic Society.

Field Ornithology I meets on Tuesdays. It is an introduction to birds and birding, combining basic field skills with the study of bird ecology, biology and behavior. Part A starts Sept. 8 and ends Oct. 20. Part B starts Oct. 27 and ends Dec. 15.

Field Ornithology II meets on Wednesdays. It is a continuing in-depth study of identification and status of North American water birds, including petrels, pelicans, herons and waterfowl. Part A starts Sept. 9 and ends Oct. 21. Part B starts Oct. 28 and ends Dec. 16.

Field Ornithology III meets on Thursdays. It is a continuing study of land birds including gamebirds, doves, cuckoos, owls, swifts and hummingbirds. Part A starts Sept. 10 and ends Oct. 22. Part B starts Oct. 29 and ends Dec. 17.

These classes are endorsed by Golden Gate Society. Optional field trips on weekends may be arranged by the instructor. Please bring binoculars and field guides to class if you have them.

Fees are \$55 for each seven-week course. Students need not take part A to enroll in part B classes. Pre-registration is recommended. For information call the San Francisco Community College, Community Services Office, 1-415-267-6514 or 1-415-561-1840.



BAY BIRDATHON SUCCESS

What do you get when you put together a hundred or so birders, hundreds of sponsors, hundreds of birds and a lot of spirited birding effort? A successful Bay Birdathon '92! This joint effort of GGAS and the Marin Audubon Society raised over \$17,000 for Mono Lake and local Audubon activities.

The Loonatics (Alan Hopkins, David Wimpfheimer, Dan Singer and Steve Bailey) took first place in number of species, spotting 188 bird species in the 24-hour Birdathon period. Kudos for best bird (Hooded Warbler) and for most funds raised go to **Rich Stallcup**.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to Bay Birdathon '92: all of you who sponsored teams; all of you who *were* the teams; Yale University Press and its birder president, John Ryden, for the donation of Sibley and Monroe's *Distribution and Taxonomy of Birds of the World* for the best bird prize; the Mono Lake Committee and the Mono Lake Foundation for the donation of other prizes; Sophie Webb for the Townsend's Warbler drawing on the '92 Birdathon T-shirt, Janet Wessel for the T-shirt lettering and Lina Prairie for the T-shirt project generally; Marin Audubon for donating MAS T-shirts as prizes; and GGAS for donating pelagic trips as prizes. Special thanks to the Bay Birdathon '92 Committee: Harrison Karr (Birdathon Coordinator), Jeanie Cohen, Ann Dewart, Elva Edger, Gayanne Enquist, Helen Green and Steve Margolin.

LISTEN TO THE MOCKINGBIRD

My mornings are not quite as entertaining since the Mockingbird has hatched her eggs. I miss her antics. Mama, who lives across the street is busy flying back and forth to the nest with tid-

bits for those gaping mouths. She looks exceedingly pleased with herself, preening and fluffing her feathers and acting as if she alone invented motherhood. She looks rather weary towards the end of the day. Down right droopy as a matter of fact. She makes it to the back garden once or twice a day for a bath, then back to the never-ending quest for food for the three hungry and extremely noisy babies.

She does take the time every morning to harass the man in the house next to her tree. He has finally learned to come out the door with a newspaper over his head. She apparently has taken this as a direct insult to her and she is furious when she sees him. Then Mama spends a little time procuring food for her little ones, all the while watching for the lady of the house to put in an appearance so she can pursue her game of yelling and carrying on. No one is going to disturb those babies!

Her little balls of fluff haven't fledged yet. I'm sure when they do, Mama will take up with the handsome fellow that is, again, serenading the neighborhood all night and all day! He perches on the highest pole available and sings, whistles, calls and on occasion even meows! In between his melodies he flies back and forth to trees and bushes hoping someone... anyone... will take him up on his euphonious efforts.

The grizzled black and white cat plods slowly across the street, looking over his shoulder. He knows he will be attacked again, yet never varies the path he takes to hunt for a tasty mouse or snake or beetle in the nearby open field. I wonder if old cats are subjected to senility as old people sometimes are?

I marvel at the winged jewels that visit the bird bath and the nectar feeders this time of year. The baby hummers, feathers ruffled with patches of white down and still somewhat clumsy, fly to the feeders. They have learned very quickly that junk food is available day

and night! Hardly larger than the bumble bees that buzz in the honeysuckle bush, they fly back to the nest and wait for Mama to feed them. It looks like she is about ready to put a stop to that very soon.

The two Hooded Orioles have brought their off-spring to the nectar feeders to compete with the lone Chestnut-backed Chickadee for that syrupy, sweet stuff. The nectar that spills when the Orioles "kick-off" from the feeders provides a tasty meal for the ants who endlessly patrol the deck below the feeders.

Two Steller's Jays sit in the gnarled old Elm tree, stridently calling to each other and waiting for their special treat of popcorn and almonds. The rosy red-breasted House Finches fly down to the deck rail and scatter seed in every direction. Towhees wait for the windfall that the finches provide, hopping down from the fence for their share.

As summer settles in, my backyard neighbors are busy getting the babies out of the nest and preparing them for the coming winter and the long flight to warmer regions. Some of them will stay around and some old friends will return. I hope the old black and white cat makes it through another year. And I hope Mama builds her nest close by next spring. I love watching that bald headed fellow scramble down the stairs, clutching his lunch box to his chest while trying to keep that bird from nailing him!!

—GERALDINE J. ARKO

BIRDING A BRAZILIAN PARADISE

The first bird on guide Paolo Boute's checklist of birds of the Pantanal is the Greater Rhea, and, sure enough, there it was, the unofficial greeter for 29 Americans visiting a spectacular Brazilian plain that is a flat out paradise for birders.

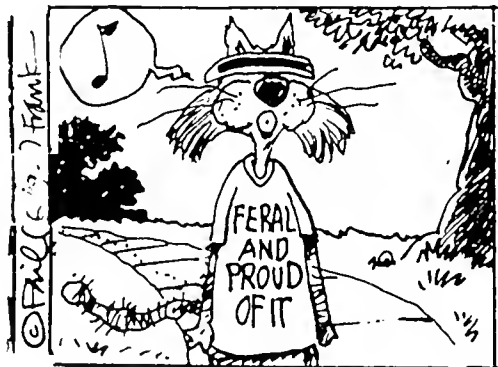
For Boute, a 28-year-old agronomist who loves every inch of this vast mixture of land and water in the midwestern sector of his country, the ostrich-like critter was a fitting welcome to his group of Elderhostelers from the north.

The tall naturalist whose father emigrated from Russia knows birds and likes birds, and along 25 miles of dusty road, he stopped the crowded van to call out egrets, herons (the Rufescent Tiger Heron was a beauty), roadside hawks, a Roseate Spoonbill and a Pearl Kite. Wow, what a start!

After a 30-minute or so boat ride to the Hotel Faxenda, a collection of cabins, with community dining room and swimming pool and plenty of walking space, we found a pair of Purple-throated Euphonia nesting next door on the porch of the cabin of Bob and Ardis Wood. Now, that was prophetic, as the Woods were the two real birders in the group, world class. They deserved the lovely orange and black pair.

My wife and I are rank amateurs. And, strange as it seems, being in such a place, no one else really cared much about birds. Oh, they looked because it was sort of the thing to do with Paolo's enthusiasm, but birds were birds, definitely not a priority.

We stuck close to the Woods, Palo Altoans in the '60s when Bob was a museum curator there and Ardis taught, and by the end of the first day we had spotted 47 species. I lost track, but at the end of the 2½ days in the area, Bob's totals came to 138 with 41



new to him. His guide was *Birds of Venezuela*. (Paolo says a new *Guide to the Birds of the Pantanal* in English is now available. Another useful text, he says, is the Sierra Club's *Pantanal, The Forgotten Wilderness*.)

Paolo figures the Pantanal contains more than 700 species of birds. He listed 217 and we saw three, a Blue-black Grassquit, Rufous Cacholote and a limpkin that weren't on the list. We saw birds of all sizes, shapes and colors, from the tiny, simply gorgeous Vermillion Flycatcher to the huge and strikingly ugly Jabiru. (I was severely chastised by one nature-lover for that description, but damn it, it is ugly.)

One morning on a post-breakfast walk near the hotel, Bob spotted five blue and yellow macaws in flight, a find that drew a loud "congratulations" from the guide. We saw Vermillion Flycatchers, Little Woodpeckers, a jacana with its drab-colored young and two Gold-collared Macaws, thanks again to Bob.

The waterways were lined with egrets, herons, Anhinga, cormorants, Ringed Kingfishers (big ones), all posing as sentinels in trees for the photographer with a long lens. The guide spotted a Bat Falcon and, hearing the call of a Blue-crowned Trogon over the roar of the outboard had the boatman maneuver to where we could see the long-tailed beauty. Wood called it the find of the trip.

But for us, there were so much that was new. Lapwings dashing about crazily, apparently protecting a nest from us hikers, loud screamers, kiskadees, and Cattle and White-headed Marsh Tyrants, three varieties of kingfisher and Red-crested and Yellow-billed Cardinals feasting in a feeder in front of the dining room. The resident cat breakfasted on one one morning. Unpleasant way to begin the day.

But with Paolo in charge we go off to seek more birds, elusive monkeys and hard-to-find caiman, small cousin to the

crocodile. We see Peach-fronted Parakeets and a Picazuro Pigeon, Whistling Ducks and a Chestnut-eared Aracari, a small version of a toucan. We won't soon forget the Troupial, the Great Black Hawk or the Yellow-headed Caracara.

"I don't see this country as an ordinary Brazilian," Paolo declares on our way out. "I see this as a blessed land." And like all blessed lands, it is a paradise under siege.

Paolo takes us to one of the most grave threats, huge open pit gold mines operating just outside the Pantanal boundary. It's all illegal, he says, but the powers that be look the other way, because the mines provide a livelihood for people. They also use mercury, lots of it, and it's a deadly polluter. The future? It's anybody's guess, but don't bet on a happy ending.

—ALAN CLINE

LETTER

For the great majority of your readers who understand that the reprint of my article was about a major cause of small-bird decline, that can be turned around, thanks and good reading. To the very few who thought the article was about ways to hurt kittens, I suggest you take some white-out and remove parts you don't like until the true thesis appears.

—Rich Stallcup

NEWS FROM OUR RANCH

Audubon Canyon Ranch (415) 868-9244
Shoreline Hwy., Stinson Beach, CA 94970
Wildlife Sanctuaries & Centers for Nature Education
under joint sponsorship of Golden Gate, Madrone, Marin
and Sequoia Audubon Societies
Gary Holloway, President
**GOLDEN GATE REPRESENTATIVES ON THE AUDUBON
CANYON RANCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
Stavan Margolin, *ex officio* Dan Murphy
Nicki Spillane Bruce Walker

CYPRESS GROVE COMES INTO ITS OWN

ACR was given controlling interest in the Cypress Grove Preserve by our

benefactor Clifford Conly at our August Board of Directors meeting which was held at the preserve. Clifford's house, which will one day serve as a conference center, was named in his honor. If you know Cypress Grove you know the importance of his gift. Our thanks go to him.

Because of it ACR not only owns the Cypress Grove Preserve, but we were moved to purchase and protect other properties along the shore of the Bay. Without ACR's presence it is doubtful that this beautiful and environmentally critical estuary would be preserved in a relatively undeveloped state, or that the environmental quality of that estuary would be continually monitored as it is.

RESEARCH AT CYPRESS GROVE

Cypress Grove Preserve is home to much of ACR's research efforts. Ranch biologist John Kelly directs and consults on many projects ranging from native prairie restoration to aquaculture monitoring. We assess populations of migrating shorebirds, wintering waterfowl and nesting colonies of herons and egrets. We work to protect endangered plants and to monitor human impacts on harbor seals. Here is a little of what we learned during the past year.

Shorebirds—their population dropped at the south end of Tomales Bay last December. But in mid-February there was a DRAMATIC crash in their population. Bolinas Lagoon's small sandpipers disappeared too. So what do we know? Lower than usual numbers of small shorebirds were noted on spring migration. Reduced numbers of these birds were noted in December, but that was somewhat expected. The complete shift of shorebird population away from south Tomales Bay and Bolinas Lagoon was unprecedented. Now we need to learn why this happened and what its implications are.

Harbor seals—their resting and pupping sites are being disturbed by clam-

mers, boaters and kayakers. Mary Ellen King and her dozen volunteers monitored harbor seal population, pupping success and incidents of human disturbance in north Tomales Bay. Since the mid 80's the population of seals which use Hog Island has dropped by about 90%. One day not long ago 1225 clammers were on the sand bars in a 3-hour period. Needless to say the 350 seals which frequent these haulouts and pupping grounds abandon them during periods of human use. Impacts are still being identified and analyzed, but once the harbor seals are driven from the sand bars what's left? Mary Ellen will continue guiding this research project.

OVERNIGHTER AT TOM'S POINT: COAST WEEK CELEBRATION

Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 19 & 20

Join John Kelly for a weekend of work and fun at Tom's Point on Tomales Bay. This is our contribution to the statewide Coast Week celebration. We'll be cleaning up litter, removing fences, perhaps building other fences and covering invasive ice plant with black plastic. Wow! You'll get to rid our planet of ice plant and have fun, too. Of course if you're spending time with John Kelly you'll have ample time to discuss the environmental issues affecting Tomales Bay, do a little birding and have a great time. Please call (415) 868-9244 to make reservations.

BOUVERIE AUDUBON PRESERVE

Saturdays: Sept. 12 and Oct. 24

9:30 AM to 1:30 PM

Don't miss your chance to experience our beautiful Bouverie Audubon Preserve near Sonoma. A docent will guide you through the 5 plant communities and wonderful animal habitats only if you register early. You may make your reservations at the beginning of the month preceding the trip you wish to attend. Please call to reserve your place at (707) 938-4554.

—DAN MURPHY

ABOUT THE BOARD

The board of directors met June 28 and welcomed newly elected Kay Loughman. It also welcomed Joelle Buffa, Program Committee Chairman, who has been doing such a fantastic job at planning monthly meetings, but who had declined to serve on the board until this year.

It enjoyed a slide program Joelle brought to introduce a major effort by governmental and private agencies for neotropical migratory bird conservation (see p. 138).

It received with pleasure news of the victory in the Distribution Center case, in which the Port of Oakland's plans are thwarted, and the Corps of Engineers is ordered to review its findings about wetlands. The court called its past effort "nonsensical."

It heard a report of the status of widening of Hwy. I-80 at the Emeryville Crescent. Efforts by GGAS members (see p. 133) and others led to changes that will protect habitat both

by limiting encroachment and enhancing control of run-off.

It voted \$1000 in support of a Sierra Club law suit filed against the Robert's Landing development which would put 800 housing units on a toxic site and adjacent to sensitive wetlands.

It considered the Environmental Federation program, a source of funding which is increasingly helpful; it will further consider how to increase our participation.

It agreed to sponsor a San Francisco member's plan for providing bird-feeders to house-bound birders, noting that its endorsement is to support, not to provide, a new service.

It listened to a suggestion that a fax machine may be needed in the office to support legislative and administrative scrutiny and response.

It fixed dates for a seed sale (Sept. 25/26), the anniversary celebration (Oct. 4), and the next board meeting (Aug. 31).

GIFTS and BEQUESTS

FOR GGAS

Gift of

Barry & Barbara Deutsch
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FOR AUDUBON ADVENTURES

Peter J. Watkins

The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use for general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society including Audubon Canyon Ranch of which GGAS is a sponsor. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull* as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.

THE GULL

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